

Office of Professional Accountability (OPA) Commendations & Complaints Report April 2004

Commendations:

Commendation Received in April: 81

Commendations Received to Date: 248

Rank	Summary
(1) Officer	An officer received a Washington State Law Enforcement Medal of Honor Recognition Award.
(2) Officers	An anxious relative could not locate their loved one by phone. With the assistance of two officers, the relative was able to locate the missing individual.
(2) Officers	Two officers responded to a phone call regarding an injured animal. The officers were very gentle and compassionate and were able to return the animal to the owners home.
(1) Officer	A student was robbed and assaulted on the way to school. The responding officer had an idea who the suspects were and followed through with his investigation. The family stated that that the officer went above and beyond the call of duty.
(2) Officers	Two officers responded to a call where a young man was found "high" on drugs and was very disrespectful. The officers were extremely professional and handled it in a caring way, to which the caller was grateful.
(8) Officers	A nine-year old girl was abducted from a local city suburb and a number of law enforcement agencies were involved. The officers deserve recognition for their heroic actions that played a huge role in the incident. The officers remained totally professional and in control throughout the stressful ordeal.
(1) Lieutenant (1) Sergeant & Escort Team (1) Civilian	The Filipino Community of Seattle appreciated the professional and wonderful job of providing security for a visiting Philippine dignitary. Thanks to the department and all officers and individuals involved in the successful visit.
Many Officers	Compliments to the men and women of the Seattle Police Department for the peaceful handling of "Fat Tuesday" event in Pioneer Square.
(1) Officer	An apology was received from a citizen for the immature behavior he exhibited when stopped. The citizen recognized that the officers are just trying to "serve and protect the public".
(35) Officers (6) Dispatchers	A number of police officers responded to a domestic violence disturbance call at a woman's shelter. The situation and suspect were eventually stabilized. The dispatchers processed information in a calm and professional manner that was necessary for the safety of the responding officers.
(3) Detectives	Three detectives volunteered to participate in a mock fire arson investigation with a local middle school. The students were very interested, informed and the experience proved to be very positive for them. The detectives were very professional and able to answer student questions.
(1) Officer	A citizen raved about an officer and his helpful assistance when her automobile mechanically failed. The officer was considerate and ensured her safety until a tow truck arrived. His kindness and humor eased a stressful situation.
(1) Detective	Kudos' to a detective for an incredible amount of work and a thorough investigation in a court case.
(3) Officers	A group of citizens commended the efforts of officers who responded to a 911 call ending in the arrest of a violently irate man. The citizens were thankful for the officer's professionalism and assistance.
(1) Civilian	Appreciation goes to an identification technician that expertly identified a thumbprint of a suspect just hours before the case was presented to the Federal

	Grand Jury. The successful indictment in this case could not have been possible without the hard work of the technician.
(1) Officer	An officer has responded to 911 calls on several occasions. Local business owners have observed him handle difficult situations and stated that the officer is highly skilled and very experienced always maintaining a professional attitude. The officer's continuous efforts to make our community safe were greatly appreciated,
(1) Officer	An officer was commended on the investigation and response to a traffic accident. The officer was courteous, polite and explained the circumstances of the incident. The citizen stated that it was reassuring to know that officers exhibit compassion to citizens on a routine basis.
(2) Detectives	Another law-enforcement agency expressed their sincere appreciation of two detectives in an investigation of an abuse case. The quality of the detective's interview and reports were of the highest professional standard. The detectives are a tribute to a fine organization and to the profession.
(4) Officers	Four officers were commended for their knowledge and diligence resulting in the recovery of a stolen vehicle. Their attention to duty and professionalism were greatly appreciated.
(1) Detective	Sincere thanks goes to a detective for his assistance in obtaining items that were purchased and not delivered. Without his help the situation would have not been resolved.
(1) Officer	A citizen expressed their heartfelt appreciation to an officer for assistance during a very difficult time.
1) Officer	An officer responded to a stolen car call. The officer was polite and patient with the caller while he had to have been frustrated. The officer was complimented on his attitude.

April 2004 Closed Cases:

Cases involving alleged misconduct of officers and employees in the course of their official public duties are summarized below. Identifying information has been removed.

Cases are reported by allegation type. One case may be reported under more than one category.

UNNECESSARY FORCE

Synopsis	Action Taken
The Department became aware that a citizen alleged in a lawsuit that named officers had used unnecessary force when they detained him as an armed robbery suspect.	An investigation was conducted into the allegations. The subject declined to cooperate with the investigation. The evidence indicates that an electronic tracking device attached to the stolen money led the officers to the subject and identified him as a possible suspect. The evidence indicates that the subject was ordered to the ground, handcuffed, then released when it was determined he was not the subject involved in the robbery. The actual suspect was arrested one block from where this incident took place. The named officers and two witnesses state that other than being forced to the ground, no additional force was applied. Finding – EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged officers used unnecessary force during the arrest of her boyfriend for robbery, car theft and eluding police.	The evidence produced in the investigation did not support the allegation of unnecessary force. The subject was driving a stolen car and led police on a lengthy pursuit. When his car stopped, he fled on foot. When he was apprehended, he resisted. The officers wrote detailed reports documenting the force used. The force was screened and reported. The subject's injuries are consistent with the force reported. The complainant and subject did not cooperate with the investigation. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY EXONERATED.

SAFEGUARDING/MISHANDLING EVIDENCE/PROPERTY

Synopsis	Action Taken
It was alleged that, while employed off-duty, the named employee seized narcotics and failed to immediately place the contraband into evidence.	Investigation established that the named employee, on several occasions, seized small quantities of narcotics from club-goers, prepared police reports documenting the seizure, but delayed transporting the contraband to Evidence to save time. Finding – SUSTAINED. In addition, policy changes were recommended to prevent a reoccurrence.

CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER

Synopsis	Action Taken
It was alleged that the named officer was rude while directing traffic and issued a traffic citation in retaliation for asking for the officer's identification.	The investigation showed the subject did stop and block traffic when she asked for directions. Some type of verbal altercation occurred between the named officer and the complainant, but it could not be determined whether the officer was rude. The evidence as to the citation supported that the motivation to cite was influenced by the subject's demeanor. Finding by Chief of Police – REFERRAL FOR TRAINING.

Definitions of Findings:

“Sustained” means the allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Not sustained” means the allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Unfounded” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or classified, or is false.

“Exonerated” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the conduct alleged did occur, but that the conduct was justified, lawful and proper.

Referred for Supervisory Resolution.

Training or Policy Recommendation means that there has been no willful violation but that there may be deficient policies or inadequate training that need to be addressed.

“Administratively Unfounded/Exonerated” is a discretionary finding which may be made prior to the completion that the complaint was determined to be significantly flawed procedurally or legally; or without merit, i.e., complaint is false or subject recants allegations, preliminary investigation reveals mistaken/wrongful employee identification, etc, or the employee's actions were found to be justified, lawful and proper and according to training.

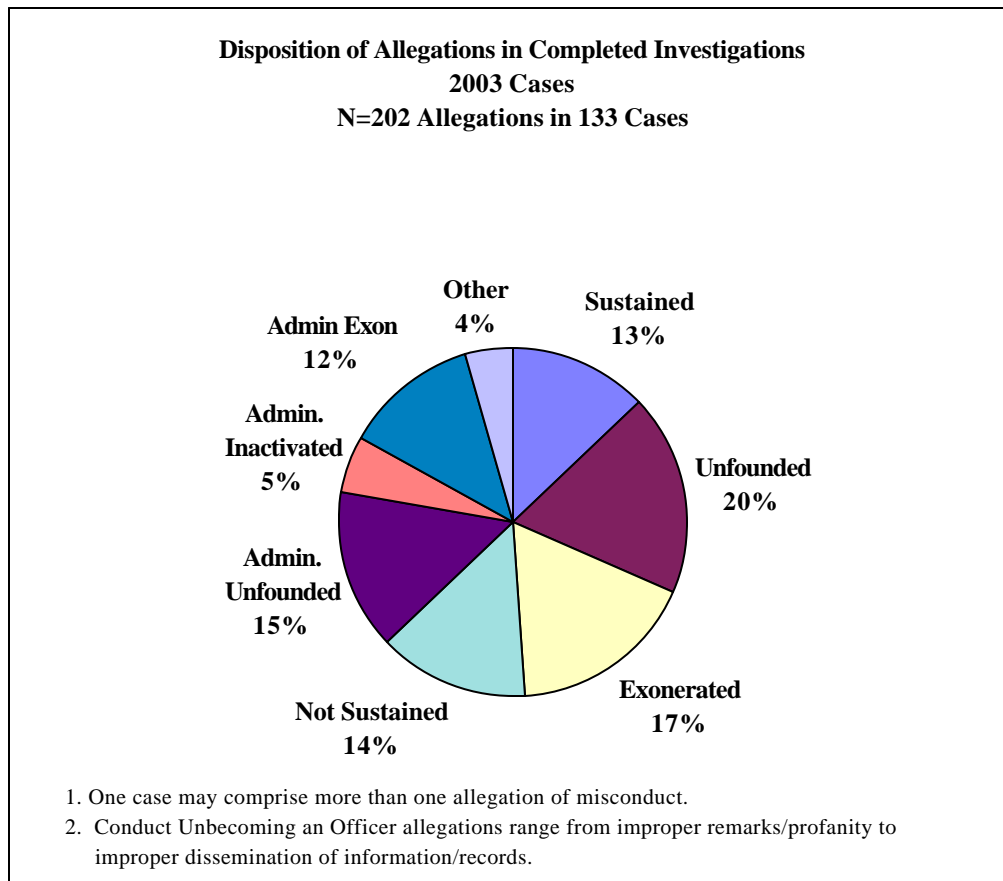
“Administratively Inactivated” means that the investigation cannot proceed forward, usually due to insufficient information or the pendency of other investigations. The investigation may be reactivated upon the discovery of new, substantive information or evidence. Inactivated cases will be included in statistics but may not be summarized in this report if publication may jeopardize a subsequent investigation.

Status of OPA Contacts to Date:

2003 Contacts

	December 2003	Jan-Dec 2003
Preliminary Investigation Reports	7	415
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	2	79
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS;LI)	10	185
Cases Closed	15	133*
Commendations	70	861

*includes 2003 cases closed in 2004



2004 Contacts

	April 2004	Jan-Dec 2004
Preliminary Investigation Reports	23	102
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	3	16
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS;LI)	14	66
Commendations	81	248